

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 DAMASC 00944 230709Z

17

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 TRSE-00

AID-05 SCCT-01 /064 W

----- 084636

R 230639Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6357

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 0944

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, SY

SUBJECT: RECENT DISTURBANCE IN HAMA

REF: (A) DAMASCUS 0831 (B) BEIRUT 1484

1. SYRIAN INTELLIGENCE DIRECTOR FOR HAMA, AN ALAWITE OFFICER NAMED MUHAMMAD GHURRA ASSIGNED TO HAMA YEAR AGO, WAS ASSASINATED THERE APPROXIMATELY TEN DAYS AGO. GHURRA, REPORTEDLY CLOSE TO ASAD FAMILY AND POSSIBLY FROM SAME TRIBE, HAD REPUTATION AS BRUTAL MAN WHO DID NOT HESITATE TO RESORT TO TORTURE OF DETAINEES. HE WAS APPARENTLY KILLED BY RELATIVES OF ONE OF HIS VICTIMS.

2. SYRIAN SOURCE IN GOOD POSITION TO KNOW, RECENTLY DESCRIBED TO EMBOFF SARG EFFORTS TO DEAL WITH INCIDENT. REGIME DISPATCHED UNITS OF RIF'AT AL-ASAD'S DEFENSE COMPANIES, UNDER LEADERSHIP OF ALI AL-ASAD, CONFIDENTIAL

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PRESIDENT'S UNCLE AND OFFICER IN THE COMPANIES, TO

RECONCILE DIFFERENCES WITHIN HAMA. HAMA RESIDENTS  
REPORTEDLY MAINTAIN SIGNIFICANT WEAPONS STORES, BUT  
NO FORCE WAS NEEDED.

3. COMMENT: DECISION TO ACTIVATE DEFENSE COMPANIES  
TO QUELL HAMA DISTURBANCES REFLECTS SENSITIVITY OF  
REGIME TO POTENTIAL INTERNAL TENSIONS AND ITS  
DETERMINATION TO PREVENT THEIR SPREADING. ALAWITE-  
SUNNI TENSIONS ARE REPORTEDLY MOST ACUTELY FELT IN  
HAMA WHERE REGIME IN PAST HAS BEEN OBLIGED TO EMPLOY  
FORCE TO PUT DOWN OUTBREAKS OF VIOLENCE ON PART OF  
CITY'S SUNNI MAJORITY. EMBASSY HAS HEARD NO HINT OF

LIBYAN INVOLVEMENT IN AFFAIR.  
MURPHY

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NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** ASSASSINATION, GOVERNMENT PERSONNEL, CIVIL DISORDERS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 23 FEB 1976  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** buchant0  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1976DAMASC00944  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D760066-0978  
**From:** DAMASCUS  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
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**Line Count:** 76  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ACTION NEA  
**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
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**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** 76 DAMASCUS 831, 76 BEIRUT 1484  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** buchant0  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 08 JUN 2004  
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**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** RECENT DISTURBANCE IN HAMA  
**TAGS:** PINS, SY, (GHURRA, MUHAMMAD)  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006